House Select Committee on Homeland Security Democrats

JIM TURNER, Ranking Member

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Turner: US-VISIT Fails to Connect the Dots

Congressman Jim Turner, Ranking Democrat on the House Select Committee on Homeland Security, released the findings of a preliminary staff investigation into the border entry-exit system, US-VISIT, in a letter to Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge.

The investigations found that the $10 billion program fails to provide interoperability between databases at various government agencies as was intended by Congress when it called for the development of a comprehensive entry-exit system. Instead, the Department of Homeland Security changed course in April 2003 and deployed a combination of old border security systems, at airports and seaports, and renamed them US-VISIT.

"After the passage of three years since the September 11 attacks and the expenditure of approximately $700 million, we have arrived at a point where we have begun to build an entry-exit system that is incapable of performing crucial counterterrorism functions, cannot share information between key agencies, and according to the 9/11 Commission, will soon have to be replaced," wrote Turner.

Turner has requested that the Department provide the Committee with documentation of the decision to change course, and to provide a detailed plan for achieving interoperability of databases.

The letter is the first in series of letters Turner intends to send on the issue.

TURNER LETTER TO RIDGE ATTACHED

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